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ABSTRACT

Curriculum planning and course organization of the Edison High School (California) reading program are described. Curriculum planning begins with identification of the reading needs of all incoming students. Group testing of all eighth grade students in local feeder schools in the spring is followed by diagnostic testing of individual strengths and weaknesses in the summer. Parents are contacted and conferences arranged to discuss reading course alternatives for the upcoming academic year. At the beginning of school, students targeted for the reading program are enrolled in one of the following courses: reading skills, developmental reading, survival reading, speed reading, and reading for enjoyment. Objectives for all courses are to improve academic reading while strengthening students' self-image. Reading class periods are divided into 15 minutes of leisure reading and 40 minutes of individualized assignments. Teaching strategies include workbooks, cassette programs, controlled reading machines, persceptoscopic materials, and bibliotherapy. The classroom program is supplemented by continuing efforts to communicate with faculty and parents on individual students' progress. (LP)

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READING PROGRAM AT EDISON HIGH SCHOOL

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The Edison High School Reading Department offers a quality well-structured program based upon careful screening and placement of students, team planning and teaching, positive morale, articulation with feeder schools and continuing parent-teacher communication. Staffed with four Secondary Reading Specialists and a fulltime aide, the Reading Department offers the following courses: Reading skills, remedial level designed for Freshman and Sophomores; Developmental Reading, designed for Sophomores and Juniors within a year of grade level; Survival Reading, designed for Juniors and Seniors who require preparation for the District Reading Proficiency Test; Speed Reading; and Reading for Enjoyment. Although the past few years have brought an increase in class size, the success of the Reading Program has been consistently reflected in District pre and post test scores that indicate an average of 1.5 to 2 months' growth in student's reading grade levels per each month in the program.

Preparation for each year's offerings by the Department begins in early Spring when the staff conducts group testing of eighth grade students at the local feeder schools. Teachers of the eighth graders are also given forms on which they can convey their personal recommendations for student placement in the high school program. Thorough follow-up diagnostic tests are then administered during the Summer months to those students identified as potential candidates for the Reading Program.

The Summer testing program allows the teachers to individually diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of each student. The battery of tests administered provide the examiner with information regarding the student's reading rate, vocabulary and comprehension skills, phonic background, visual perception and auditory discrimination abilities. Parents of the designated students are sent a form on which they can record information regarding their child's educational history as well as their recommendation for student placement. These parents are then contacted by phone on the day following testing so that the Reading teacher can discuss the test results and reach

a common decision regarding enrollment in the Reading program. It should be noted that a permanent diagnostic folder containing the battery of test forms and parent contact sheet, is kept on each student who completes Summer testing and is enrolled in the program. This diagnostic folder is maintained and systematically updated by the individual Reading teacher as the school year progresses.

Once the school year begins, the Reading Department team plans their curriculum to promote not only improvement in academic reading scores but also improvement in the students self-image. By maintaining high, but not unrealistic standards for classroom conduct and academic achievement, the staff helps foster each student's sense of pride in his/her individual work. Students are taught to keep neat, accurate records of their daily work. With each instructional period divided into fifteen minutes of leisure reading and forty minutes of individual reading assignments, the students are offered a variety of learning modes and activities. The four Reading Specialists meet frequently to team plan in order that the numerous Reading Lab materials are circulated and utilized in an effective manner.

The four Reading teachers use an eclectic teaching approach in developing their students' vocabulary, comprehension and rate skills. Along with individual workbooks, such diverse activities as cassette tape programs, controlled reading machines and persceptoscopic materials are utilized. The four Specialists also recognize the value of Bibliotherapy, a method wherein students are introduced to popular books that reflect the emotional development and contemporary interests of today's adolescents. The success of Bibliotherapy is reflected in the great amount of books read each semester by formerly reluctant readers. To further foster pride in their accomplishments,

students keep a colorful chart illustrating their total number of leisure reading books completed each term.

The Reading staff recognizes that the success of their program also dictates continual articulation with other teachers as well as with parents of their students. To facilitate campus communication, the Reading teachers keep other departments informed of student participation in the Reading Program by issuing up-to-date lists and other information regulary to other department staff members. The Reading Department also offers the service of conducting various readability tests on textbooks under consideration by different departments for possible classroom use. Secondly, the staff considers articulation with parents to be most important. As noted previously, parents of incoming students are called upon completion of Summer diagnostic testing so that test results and teacher recommendations can be shared with them. Additional communications with the home are facilitated by the fact the department office adjoins the Reading classrooms - a quite phone call home regarding student attendance and/or academic achievement is easily made during the school day. When schoolwide Open House is held each year, the Reading teachers compose a separate written invitation and send it home with a personal, positive comment about each student.

In order to keep their Reading Program a model curriculum, the Staff makes a concerted effort to maintain a positive morale and foster professional growth. In addition to participation in conferences sponsored by the International Reading Association and the Orange County Reading Association, of which the Reading Department Chairperson is an Executive Council member, the four teachers have attended District-sponsored Staff Development Seminars and have visited both public and private Reading clinics to view different approaches to the teaching of Reading. All department members are also

involved in extracurricular school activities which confirms their collective dedication to students and serves as an indication of their continuing high morale.